

Maryland Historical Trust

Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Number: WO-461

Name: USSO OVER SINEPUXENT BAY.

The bridge referenced herein was inventoried by the Maryland State Highway Administration as part of the Historic Bridge Inventory, and SHA provided the Trust with eligibility determinations in February 2001. The Trust accepted the Historic Bridge Inventory on April 3, 2001. The bridged received the following determination of eligibility.

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST	
Eligibility Recommended <u> X </u>	Eligibility Not Recommended <u> </u>
Criteria: <u> A </u> <u> B </u> <u> C </u> <u> D </u>	Considerations: <u> A </u> <u> B </u> <u> C </u> <u> D </u> <u> E </u> <u> F </u> <u> G </u> <u>None</u>
Comments: _____	

Reviewer, OPS: <u> Anne E. Bruder </u>	Date: <u> 3 April 2001 </u>
Reviewer, NR Program: <u> Peter E. Kurtze </u>	Date: <u> 3 April 2001 </u>

Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties
Historic Bridge Inventory
Maryland State Highway Administration
Maryland Historical Trust

MHT No. WO-461

Name and SHA No. Ocean City Bridge (No. 23007)

Location:

Street/Road Name and Number: US Route 50 over Sinepuxent Bay

City/Town: Ocean City _____ vicinity

County: Worcester

Ownership: ☒ State ☐ County ☐ Municipal ☐ Other

This bridge projects over: ☐ Road ☐ Railway ☒ Water ☐ Land

Is the bridge located within a designated district: ☐ yes ☒ no

☐ NR listed district ☐ NR determined eligible district

☐ locally designated ☐ other

Name of District _____

Bridge Type:

☐ Timber Bridge

☐ Beam Bridge ☐ Truss-Covered ☐ Trestle ☐ Timber-and-Concrete

☐ Stone Arch

☐ Metal Truss Bridge

☒ Movable Bridge

☐ Swing ☐ Bascule Single Leaf ☒ Bascule Multiple Leaf

☐ Vertical Lift ☐ Retractable ☐ Pontoon

☐ Metal Girder

☐ Rolled Girder ☐ Rolled Girder Concrete Encased

☐ Plate Girder ☐ Plate Girder Concrete Encased

☐ Metal Suspension

☐ Metal Arch

☐ Metal Cantilever

☐ Concrete

☐ Concrete Arch ☐ Concrete Slab ☐ Concrete Beam ☐ Rigid Frame

☐ Other Type Name _____

Description:**Describe Setting:**

The Ocean City Bridge carries US Route 50 from the Eastern Shore mainland across Sinepuxent Bay to the barrier island on which Ocean City is located. Ocean City is a summer resort of hotels, motels, apartment houses and condominiums built on a three-mile stretch of the coastal barrier island, which is approximately 1/4-mile wide at this point. In the immediate area of the bridge are marinas, restaurants, bars, and other businesses that cater to the tourists.

Describe Superstructure and Substructure:

Constructed in 1942, the Ocean City Bridge is a double leaf rolling lift bascule movable bridge. A rolling lift bascule is one in which the center of rotation moves away from the opening when the span swings upward. Fenders built in the water at the corner of each movable span protect the spans from possible impact from ships passing through the channel. The Ocean City Bridge consists of 72 concrete slab approach spans and one steel main span. The approach spans are supported on concrete bents.

The bridge tender's house is one floor above street level, is constructed of concrete, with a flat roof. A plaque attached to the front elevation of the tender's house dedicates the bridge to the memory of Harry W. Kelley, former mayor of Ocean City.

Discuss major alterations:

Aside from various repairs over the years, there have been no major alterations to this bridge.

History:

When Built: 1942

Why Built: *The Ocean City Bridge replaced an earlier, narrower bridge that was located about five blocks south.*

Who Built: State Roads Commission

Who Designed: J. E. Greiner Co. under the direction of W. G. Hopkins, State Roads Commission

Why Altered: Bridge stabilization and repairs

Was this bridge built as part of an organized bridge building campaign?

The 1920s and 1930s saw an active bridge-building campaign to replace narrow and unsafe bridges on the major highways of the Eastern Shore. Since the Good Roads Movement of the 1880s, Maryland citizens had been increasingly vocal in their demands for better roads. While the Eastern Shore had long relied on navigable waterways to transport goods to market, the decline of steamboat traffic and the rise of faster, more efficient vehicular traffic required action. With the growth in the number of automobiles and trucks

early in the twentieth century, the need for better roads became particularly urgent. The program carried out in the 1920s and 1930s came in response to the shift from steamboats to trucks as the principal carriers of the region's agricultural and maritime produce to markets in Baltimore and beyond. Although this bridge is slightly later than others constructed in the 1920s and 1930s, it may be considered a part of this program. In addition, Ocean City's position as an important resort area would encourage the construction of a bridge that could accommodate increased traffic volumes and speeds.

Surveyor Analysis:

This bridge may have NR significance for association with:

☒ A Events ☐ B Person

☒ C Engineering/Architectural Character

Was the bridge constructed in response to significant events in Maryland or local history?

Rivers and streams provided the primary means of transportation on the Eastern Shore before the twentieth century. If bridges were built across navigable rivers, they had to be either high enough to allow ships clearance beneath the bridge or they had to be movable to allow navigation on the waterway. High, fixed bridges required extensive approach work and very high grades; hence, movable bridges became the primary technological method for spanning the Eastern Shore's navigable rivers (Spero 1994:85).

By the 1920s, however, vehicular traffic was taking precedence over steamboats as the primary carriers of the region's agricultural and maritime produce to market. The decline of steamboat transportation left the Eastern Shore isolated and its economy damaged. Highway transportation was faster, but it required building better and wider roads and replacing outmoded bridges. The Ocean City Bridge was one of a group of movable bridges constructed on the Eastern Shore in the 1920s and 1930s to meet this need.

When the bridge was built and/or given a major alteration, did it have a significant impact on the growth and development of the area?

While its precise influence on the growth and development of Ocean City at the time of its construction is not known with certainty, it is presumed that a wider crossing at this point, with a capability to handle increased traffic loads and speeds would have had a positive economic impact on the resort by facilitating improved transportation.

Is the bridge located in an area which may be eligible for historic designation and would the bridge add to or detract from the historic and visual character of the possible district?
No.

Is the bridge a significant example of its type?

The Ocean City Bridge is significant under Criterion A for its role in the development of transportation on the Eastern Shore during the Modern Period, when vehicular traffic took precedence over steamboats to transport local agricultural and maritime products to markets in Baltimore and beyond.

The Ocean City Bridge is significant under Criterion C as one of only 20 historic bascule bridges remaining in Maryland. Bascule bridges currently are more common than other forms of movable bridges on the Eastern Shore. They were the earliest type of movable bridge built in Maryland, and although swing bridges, for a time, gained precedence, bascule bridges garnered renewed interest with the development by the State Roads Commission of reinforced concrete bridges (Spero 1994).

Does the bridge retain integrity of the important elements described in the Context Addendum?

The Ocean City Bridge retains its integrity of location and design. In view of the recent extensive development of Ocean City's tourism industry, it is unlikely that the bridge retains its integrity of setting, feeling, and association. Repairs to the bridge appear to have been minor and replacement elements in-kind.

Is the bridge a significant example of the work of the manufacturer, designer, and/or engineer and why?

The Ocean City Bridge is a significant example of the collaborative work of the State Roads Commission and the J. E. Greiner Company. The J. E. Greiner Company was established in 1908 by John Edwin Greiner, a prominent Baltimore engineer, who had previously designed railroad bridges for the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad. The Greiner Company appears to have designed most of the movable bridges on the Eastern Shore during the 1920s and 1930s. While the trend in the early decades of the twentieth century was toward standardized bridge design, particularly for those bridges constructed of concrete, movable bridges on the Eastern Shore designed by the Greiner Company were not standardized. Each bridge exhibits a different style and different decorative elements.

Should this bridge be given further study before significance analysis is made and why?

Further study of this bridge would answer the question of the impact the bridge had on the growth and development of the local area at the time of its construction.

Provide black and white prints and negatives and color slides of bridge, details, and setting labeled according to NR Bulletin 16A and Maryland Supplement to Bulletin 16A.

Provide a photocopy USGS map illustrating the location of the bridge.

Surveyor:

Name: Alice Crampton/Julie Abell

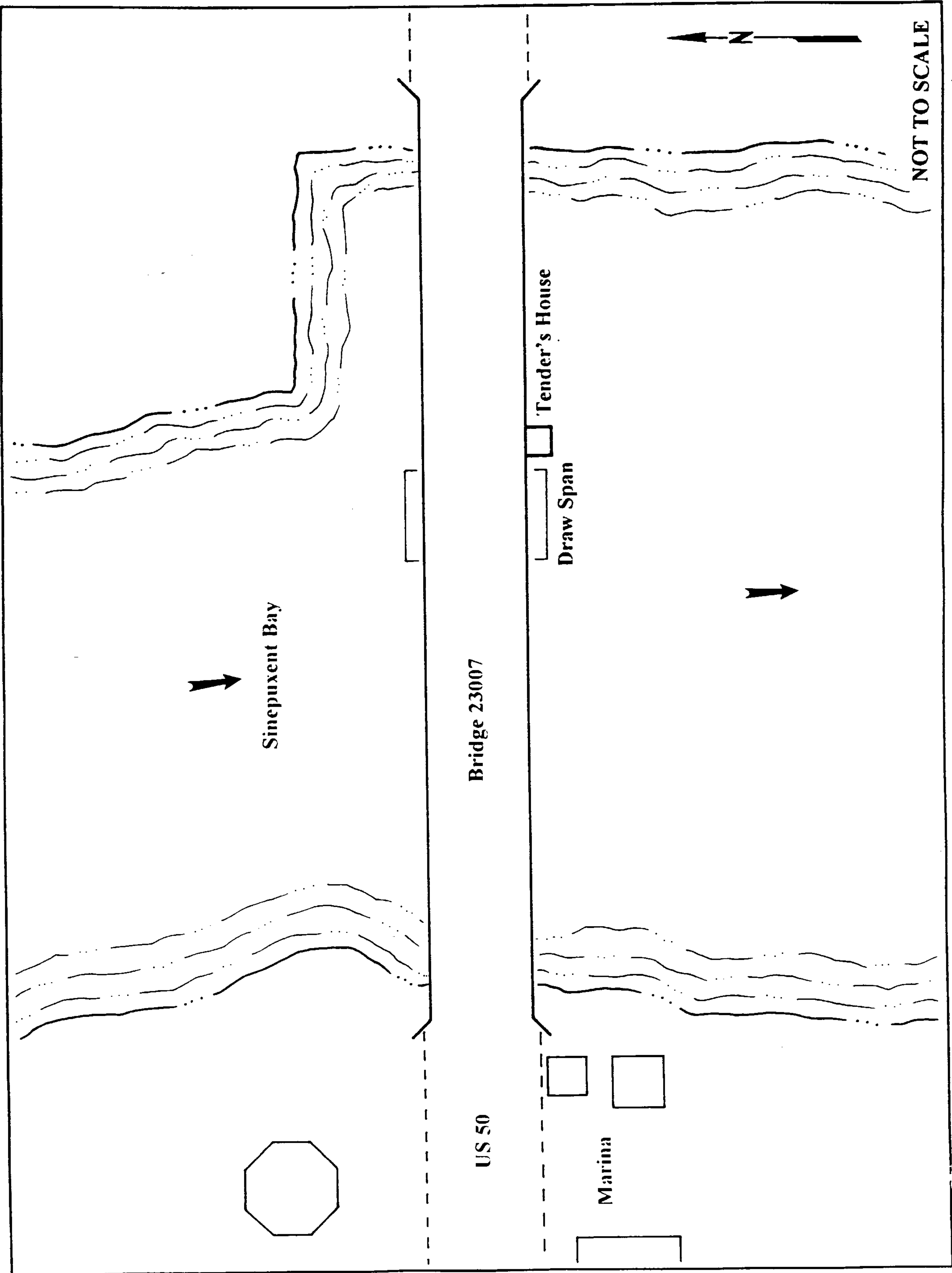
Date: Dec. 13, 1994

Organization: Parsons Engineering-Science

Telephone: (703) 591-7575

Address: 10521 Rosehaven Street
Fairfax, Virginia 22030-2899

[illegible]





000-461
Ocean City Bridge (23007)
Worcester County, Maryland

Julie Abell

12/94

Maryland State Highway Administration

South elevation, detail

1 of 7



000-461
Ocean City Bridge (23007)

Worcester County, Maryland

Julie Abell

12/94

Maryland State Highway Administration

South elevation, detail

2 of 7



SUNOCO

OPEN ON C LL

WE HONOR
ALL CARDS

THE WHITE MARLIN MARINA

FUEL
DOCKAGE

00-461

Ocean City Bridge (23007)

Worcester County, Maryland

Julie Abell

12/94

Maryland State Highway Administration

South elevation, detail

3 of 7



WATCH FOR
CURRENT

ATTENTION
TO THE
BRIDGE

DEPT. OF
TRANSPORTATION

SLOW

6

SUNOCO



OP

WO-461
Ocean City Bridge (23007)
Worcester County, Maryland
Julie Abell

7/95
Maryland State Highway Administration
South elevation, drawspan detail
4 of 11



WARNING
BRIDGE
CLOSED

BRIDGE
CLOSED

Drawbridge
Closed
60-297-170

SLOW

JUDITH M

SUNOCO

OPEN
/ G
KA

W00-461
Ocean City Bridge (23007)

Worcester County, Maryland

Julie Abell

7/95

Maryland State Highway Administration
South elevation, drawspan opening detail

5 of 11



WO-461

Ocean City Bridge (23007)

Worcester County, Maryland

Julie Abell

12/94

Maryland State Highway Administration

North elevation

6 of 11



WO-461
Ocean City Bridge (23007)
Worcester County, Maryland

Julie Abell

7/95

Maryland State Highway Administration
North elevation, detail

7 of 11



00-461
Ocean City Bridge (23007)
Worcester County, Maryland
Julie Abell
7/95

Maryland State Highway Administration
North elevation, drawspan detail
8 of 11



WO-461
Ocean City Bridge (23007)
Worcester County, Maryland
Julie Abell

12/94
Maryland State Highway
Administration
Approach looking west
9 of 11



WO-461
Ocean City Bridge (23007)
Worcester County, Maryland
Julie Abell

12/94
Maryland State Highway
Administration
Approach looking east
10 of 11

THIS BRIDGE
DEDICATED TO
THE MEMORY OF
HARRY W. KELLEY

(1918 - 1985)

MAYOR OF OCEAN CITY, MD.
1970 - 1985

MO-461
Ocean City Bridge (23007)

Worcester County, Maryland

Julie Abell

12/94

Maryland State Highway Administration

1985 plaque

11 of 11